

Committee on Equal Opportunities
Council on Postsecondary Education
April 20, 2009

Comments by Diversity Plan Collaborators

Based on the action plan adopted by CPE January 16, 2009, the CEO is soliciting input from various collaborators to inform development of a mission, vision, core values, and definition of diversity that will undergird a diversity plan for public postsecondary education in Kentucky.

To facilitate the discussion process, the draft statements have been shared with collaborators, institutional presidents, provosts, legal counsels, and members of the general public as the beginning point for discussion and offering of recommendations for consideration by the CEO and CPE as elements in a diversity plan. The draft statements are a product of input from the above collaborators filtered through CPE staff and institutional equal opportunity representatives.

The information presented in today's meeting is a continuation of the process of CEO seeking input from a broad array of collaborators to inform the process for developing a plan. Input received will be used to further clarify the primary plan elements, which will remain a work in progress until, to the extent possible, all collaborators have had an opportunity for input.

It is believed that a critical element is whether the plan supports the health and well being of the Commonwealth and its citizens. Thus, sustaining a statewide commitment to educational access becomes an economic imperative of effectively managing Kentucky's diverse resources and directly impacts its ability to successfully compete in the global marketplace. Conversely, the social necessity of effectively managing diversity is critical if Kentucky is to become an attractive place to live, to raise children, and to build successful businesses and careers. To provide some background with regard to the economic benefit of diversity and to explore some of the demographic characteristics that influence the success of these efforts, representatives of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center and the Kentucky State Data Center and former members of CPE/CEO were invited to speak to the Committee.

Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center

The center is asked to provide a basic philosophical argument in favor of having a population that respects, welcomes, and celebrates diversity, if for no other reason than economic self-interests. Included in the conversations will be examples of opportunities lost because a community could not persuade a biotech firm to locate there. The Center will also explore with CEO the idea that "whatever its root cause, Kentucky's persistent homogeneity is problematic for our shared future." They will also discuss the question "what is the role of

postsecondary education in helping to address this critical issue; what may its relationship be to Kentucky's efforts to attract new business and industry?"

Kentucky State Data Center

The State Data Center is asked to provide a basic overview of demographic information that contrasts the Kentucky population with the population of other areas to identify ways that diversity planning can benefit the economic prosperity of the Commonwealth by: (a) linking diversity, education, and economic development by region of the state; (b) linking the trends in educational attainment of African Americans and other minorities to Kentucky's ability to attract industry; (c) linking the student pipeline (P-12) and its diversity to economic development, world economy and competitiveness; (d) linking collaboration among government, education, and business to improve workforce development and participation in the pipeline; and (e) suggesting actions to consider, demographics to pay attention to, and other actions that may impact areas that should be investigated.

Former Members of CEO/CPE

Former Committee on Equal Opportunity members Walter A. Baker, Marlene Helm, William Wilson, Hilma Prather, Lois Combs Weinberg, and Steve Barger are invited to provide comments to the committee regarding what should be included in a statewide diversity plan, or whether Kentucky should even have a diversity plan. As former members of the committee, their observations and suggestions may add great value to the vision and deliberations as a new plan is developed. The conversation offers a unique opportunity for the committee receive insight and to discuss this project.

The plan/policy review workgroup will continue to provide opportunities for collaborators to provide input and suggestions to further clarify the postsecondary education diversity plan. As opportunities are identified, members of CEO and its constituents will be given notice.